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Tierney, James oral history interview

Marisa Burnham-Bestor

Interview with James Tierney by Marisa Burnham-Bestor

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Tierney, James

Interviewer
Burnham-Bestor, Marisa

Date
January 21, 2000

Place
Lewiston, Maine

ID Number
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Biographical Note

James Tierney was born on April 27, 1947 in Brooklyn, New York. He grew up in Brunswick, Maine and took advantage of the proximity to Bowdoin College by sitting in on classes and studying in the library. He earned his B.A. at the University of Maine, Orono, then married and attended University of Maine Law School while also serving in the Maine House of Representatives. He started a law firm, primarily representing labor, and was appointed State Attorney General in 1980.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Maine legislature 1946-1949; Office of Price Stabilization(OPS); 1954 gubernatorial campaign; 1976 Senate campaign; Muskie's 80th birthday party in Washington, DC; several Muskie anecdotes; and Brunswick and Lisbon Falls communities.

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Transcript

Marisa Burnham-Bestor: The date is January 21st, 2000. We're at Muskie Archives at Bates College, present are James Tierney and Marisa Burnham-Bestor is interviewing. You could just start by stating your name and spelling it for me.

James Tierney: My name is James Tierney, T-I-E-R-N-E-Y.

MB: Where and when were you born and raised?

JT: I was born on April 12th, 1947 in Brooklyn, New York, and we came to Maine when I was two. And I lived in Brunswick until I graduated from the University of Maine and since that time have lived Durham or Lisbon Falls.

MB: What type of community did you spend most of your time in and what were the differences between the places that you lived?

JT: Can you hear this okay? Are you picking this up?

MB: Yup.

JT: I lived in Brunswick when I was a kid, and it was, we lived, at least my perception of it was that it was a very stratified, socially stratified community. And I'm not sure if that's true, that was my perception of it. I came from a low income, Irish Catholic, divided family. And so for me, most of my friends were, a good job in my neighborhood was my neighbor who was the fireman or mailman, I mean, that seemed to me about as big a job as you could get. I was fortunate, though, in that Brunswick, and I'm sure it changed my life, also had a college community that I would avail myself of. I would run up as a kid, sneak into lectures at Bowdoin, study in the Bowdoin library, hear speakers, pretty much on my own, try not to be a pest. But I did that all through, certainly all through high school, and that gave me a sense that there was a bigger world out there.

And I don't think it's surprising that a lot of Maine national figures also lived in towns that were in some way related to a college. Olympia Snowe was from Auburn, Ed Muskie and George Mitchell in Waterville. I mean, Bill Cohen in Bangor and thus the University of Maine. And I think that there is something, if you're coming out of a tough background, to know, I mean it does help you see that there's an outside world there, which isn't what you asked but you got me talking, so I apologize.

MB: And then you had mentioned that after you lived in Brunswick, you moved to where?

JT: Well, after I was out of college, I went, I lived in Brunswick, through the University of Maine, I was married, and my wife and I bought a house in Durham, and then moved to Lisbon Falls where we lived for a long time. I did live three years in Topsham, but then back to Lisbon Falls again where we live now.

MB: And how was the Lisbon Falls, the non-college town?

JT: Lisbon Falls and Durham were very, very poor working class communities. There was no real sense of a world outside there. I can remember going into the local pharmacy shortly after I moved there to buy a Sunday *New York Times*, and there was like silence in the store, no one had ever heard of it. Somebody said, "You mean that big thick one," and I said, yeah, the big thick one. They said, "Yeah, we had a summer person used to get that two or three years ago." But, I mean, there was just no acknowledgment that that could exist. Wonderful people, but a very blue collar, tough town, and mill town at that time. People worked in the shoe shops, the textile mills . . . .

Bath Iron Works was a great job, Pjepscot Paper Mill where I had worked in college was considered a great job. And as a result I think world visions were pretty limited in Lisbon and Durham.

I represented those towns in the legislature for eight years, and when you do that, you really kind of knock on every door and you really get to know the people. And, wonderful, good people individually, but collectively they would be, it was a town of what would later be called Reagan Democrats. It was, you worked hard, you kept to yourself, you bought your own house, a good neighbor was someone who didn't bother anybody. And that was, so that was Lisbon Falls and Durham. And to a large extent it's still that way, the core of the town I don't think has changed

substantially.

MB: How was your family, what were your parents' names first of all?

JT: My mom's name was Agnes, my father's name was Charles. Dad wasn't around very much. Both were high school dropouts. They were very smart, there were always books in our house. That made us different from most families. And again, Brunswick had a library and I, in part in refuge from the dysfunctional atmosphere at home, I was a regular, regularly attended the Brunswick Library, so much so that the, I can recall that the librarians all had my card and the card of my brothers and my sister memorized. So they, we didn't have to, you know, give them our card number.

So we were great readers, but it was a difficult situation and, but there was a lot of, Irish by culture and by temperament are highly verbal, and so there was a lot of verbalization in the home. Lots of discussions, lots of arguments about, not just crazy things, but I mean about issues of the day were very much discussed, I think far more so than in most homes then, and certainly almost any home now.

MB: Were your parents first generation Americans?

JT: Yeah, my dad was an immigrant, my mom was the daughter of immigrants, and they, you know, they bore all the scars of that. It's, unfortunately tends to be sanctified, but it was, you know, a horrible experience which usually left scars on families for a long time.

MB: How many siblings did you have?

JT: I have an older sister, an older brother, and a younger brother, we're four years apart.

MB: And have they also been remaining in Maine?

JT: No, they're all gone, all have advanced degrees, all doing fine. One brother's a computer guru for a chip manufacturer, another brother works for the immigration service, and my sister's a social worker in Seattle. But no, I'm the only one left in Maine. Which again was a typical trail.

MB: What did your parents do for a living?

JT: My dad was chronically unemployed. He worked in brush factories, he was a barber, he finally lied about his education and got a job with the state. which he was able to keep for ten years. My mom was also habitually unemployed. She did different kinds of jobs, she was a chambermaid, she worked in a dress factory, she was a secretary for a while. She had a, she was difficult to get along with, so she got fired a lot. She eventually went to college, actually, after all the kids left home, and that was a great thing that she did. She graduated from the University of New Hampshire when she was in her fifties, but again, always had a hard time keeping a job.

MB: Was Brunswick a very Irish Catholic populated area?

JT: No, it was mostly, there was the college, which was like a million miles away, but the core of the town was a Franco-American mill town. Most of my friends were Franco- Americans. There was a number of Irish as well. There were two Catholic churches, the big one was the French church and the small one was the Catholic Church, the Irish church.

MB: Were your parents able to feel involved in the community?

JT: Yeah, they were, yeah, they did that, they barged in kind of. And certainly, you know, my father would stand up and speak at town meetings and, back when we had town meetings, and so yeah, they were involved in the community. And all of the kids were, we were all pretty well known. I was the most known, but they were all well known.

MB: So in what way would you describe your father and mother's political beliefs?

JT: Well, I think they were aspiring. I think they would have liked to have been Republicans, but they were so overwhelmingly ethnically and intellectually Democrats they ended up as Democrats. In a sense they would like to have aspired to be more middle class and accepted: they always lied about their education, the lack of it, and covered it pretty well because they were very well read and very verbal. But when it would come down to it, usually emotion would overwhelm intellect and they would vote for the Democrats.

MB: What sort of political social values do you feel that they have instilled in you and your siblings?

JT: Well, I guess my mom, because she was kind of pretty much raising us, was very I guess, individualistic. And my, at their funeral last summer, my sister said that she thought my mom was an early and instinctual feminist. And it was true that my mom and dad encouraged my sister to go to college and really expected her to, even though she was valedictorian of her class in 1956, so she's eight years older than I am. Things that are taken for granted today were not taken for granted then. It would have been very easy for them to not push their daughter to go, for example. So that was a good value. They also, it was such a difficult situation. It's hard to say what kind of values, clearly, chronic unemployment, but they were reverse values, I think. I never wanted to be broke the way they were their whole lives, and it was one of the primary reasons I became a lawyer I can recall, was so I'd never be poor. So that's kind of instilling a value, kind of in a backwards sort of way. But, so it's hard to define around my parents.

MB: How were your parents able to put all four kids through college?

JT: Oh, they didn't, they didn't do anything to help us, they just said we could, and that we didn't have to go to work. It was up to us to do that. No, they didn't do anything to help us.

MB: When, can you tell me about your -

JT: Except they didn't charge us, that was nice, they didn't charge us like if we were home summers while we were in school. They didn't charge us rent, so again, we considered that a

benefit.

MB: Can you tell me about your education, which schools you went to and *(unintelligible phrase)?*

JT: I went to Brunswick High School, where I was involved in every conceivable activity, except athletics because I wasn't very good. I went to the University of Maine because that was the only financial option. I'd been accepted at other places, but they weren't even remotely within the realm of possibility. Bowdoin offered me a full scholarship in June, but I turned that down because I wanted to get out of town at that point because Brunswick was a local school. So I went to the University of Maine, I spent my junior year at McGill, and graduated from the University of Maine in 1969. I was a good student and left there very grateful for the fact that I wasn't in debt, that I was married to the same person I'm married to now, and that I had a good life in front of me, which I've had. I owe a lot to public education.

MB: What activities were you involved in, in high school and, you know, when did you sort of make your decisions about wanting to be a lawyer?

JT: I was always involved in government from the time I was a very, very little kid. I mean I'm talking way before high school. I was, I would always run up and be involved in anything that was political. Like, I'd go into candidates meetings in both parties even though I was clearly a Democrat. Certainly through junior high school, I can remember, you know, campaigning for Jack Kennedy in 1960, giving speeches and debates. I was a little *wunderkind,* and the local Democratic committee would stick me in the back of a car and drive me off to some meeting. I can't remember where they were now, but I'd stand up and give these speeches. It was kind of pitiful, I suppose, looking back. But that's how I spent my childhood.

I was involved in every conceivable student activity, student government sort of thing, and only did fairly well academically in high school, not tremendously well. I started the teenage Democrats, if you can believe that, at Brunswick High School, and hauled a bus load of kids down to Portland to see Lyndon Johnson when he spoke there in '64, in his campaign, and devastated when Jack Kennedy was killed. So I was very sensitive, I was very familiar with all of the local campaigns and races and in, you know, with little, if anybody really cared about me I could dig around and find out all kinds of the minutia about campaigns that I recall very clearly through that period.

MB: Did you also attend public primary school?

JT: Yes, yes, I'm sorry, yeah, I went to the local public, local public school, which I walked to up to the corner from my house, and, Hawthorne School in Brunswick. And, yeah, it's all traditional, kind of very traditional kind of education, which worked well for me. I think it didn't work well for a lot of other people, I don't necessarily recommend it, but it worked well for me because it gave me very concrete goals that I could aspire to. Coming out of a dysfunctional family myself, it became a very concrete. I was in Boy Scouts, and I was active in the Catholic Church, again, very concrete role models and directions. And I considered politics as an extension of that. And politically I was always quite liberal. I mean when I was in high school,

I was involved in civil rights things as well. By college I was certainly involved in the anti-war issues, usually held leadership positions in all of that.

MB: Wow. How do you feel that some of those experiences changed you or made you even more liberal?

JT: Well, it's, I mean I always felt that government should, that we're all on earth to make the world better, and that government, I saw government as a way to do that. And this was hard to explain even to people just a few years younger than I was, but when I was coming along, government was doing great things. In the 1950s they were passing social security reform. In the'60s the, at least the northeast politicians were fighting for civil rights against the southern ones. Jack Kennedy was seen as a force for good, so you thought government was a good thing and not a bad thing to be associated with.

People just a few years younger than I am, their first concept of government was the Vietnam War, and they assumed the war was a bad, I mean the government was a bad thing, so they, so it was a different kind of orientation. But I always thought government was good, and I still think government is good, and I'm still very actively involved with it. But I do think it requires proactive leadership, it's not just something that sits there waiting to happen. You've got to go out and make it happen, and that was always my attitude, and again continues to be my attitude today.

MB: You had mentioned that you met your wife in college. What was her name?

JT: Her name is Susan, Susan Webster Tierney. I met her on a peace march at our Newman Center, I was organizing in my local Catholic Newman Center when I was a sophomore and she was a freshman.

MB: I was going to ask you, was she also politically . . . .

JT: Yeah, she was then, she's not now. She has a more mature view of these things and doesn't get involved.

MB: And did you start a family immediately?

JT: Yeah, we did, we were married on semester break in 1969, I taught school for two years in Auburn at Webster Junior High School, and we had our first child during that year. I then went to law school after two years of teaching, and we had a foster child then. We had another child by the time I graduated from law school, so we were fairly early in starting our family.

MB: Where did you attend law school?

JT: It was the University of Maine. I had several options at that point because I'd done well academically that would have. We had bought a house in Durham and it would have required moving, and, to New York or to Ithaca, and I decided that we would stay. We would stay in Maine. That's what my wife wanted to do, we had a lot of friends from campus, and so I went to

the University of Maine.

MB: What were you planning on doing with your law degree?

JT: Law degree was always there just to make a living, and that meant practicing law in Maine in some sort of undefined way when that began. I hated law school, only took my tests, so I didn't take it very seriously. I ran for the legislature my first year, my first year in law school, and was elected, and so I was in law school pretty much all through, I was in the legislature all through law school. And as I went along I became very interested in labor unions and representing unions and working people, which is what my practice pretty much consisted of exclusively as long as I was in private practice.

MB: How were you able to be in the legislature and in law school simultaneously?

JT: Well, l worked hard. l didn't take law school seriously, that's what. I didn't care about it, I just showed up for exams, didn't do particularly well academically, so the legis-, my family and my job to keep first, which was the legislature. I also substitute taught and did anything else I could to make a living. I mean, there was nobody helping us going through, we had two children, we didn't think that Susan should work outside the home during that time, so she didn't. And so I was the wage earner and the student through that time.

MB: So when you graduated law school, did you plan to continue in the legislature *(unintelligible phrase)?*

JT: Yeah, I was already in the legislature, I was, you know, chairman of the labor committee when I graduated. And I would have been probably assistant majority leader, but I had to take the Bar exam so I didn't run. And came out of law school in '75, was reelected in '76 when I did run for majority leader at that point, and I was elected, and I served as majority leader for my last two terms. So, when I was twenty-nine I was, and I don't recommend this for anyone, but when I was twenty-nine we had four children because we had twins in 1978. I had four children, I was twenty-nine years old, I was majority leader of the House of Representatives, and I was in the law firm that I had founded that was general counsel to the Maine AFL-CIO. So I was pretty busy.

MB: Tell me a little bit about your experience in the legislature and what the labor unions were doing at that time, what attracted you to that, and how you kind of cultivated it?

JT: Well, I had realized at that point, having gone through kind of the civil rights and anti-war issues, that a lot of these issues rose due to the economic disparity in our society. And I felt that organized labor was the best organization and the best way available to allowing individual working people to live a better life. And remember, I was representing Lisbon and Durham, which was a pretty tough community, and I could see when I walked into a union family that things were better. They had more things, they had more control over their life, they had better control over their pension, they had more security in their job. So I was very attracted to that and did a huge amount of labor work as a private lawyer representing unions through strikes, representing individuals who had been hurt on the job, and my legislative record kind of speaks

for itself. It was pretty strong in that level, area as well.

MB: What were some of the other things going on in the, what were some of the forces working against you at that time?

JT: Well, the same forces that always work against, you know, against people who have these views. I mean, all the economics have changed dramatically. The people who had power in the state at that point were obviously not pleased with most of my initiatives. But I kept working, you know, working away and, you know, the paper companies and the power companies, and the business community basically was never really happy with my views. And I was pretty young and naive at that point, too, I mean I didn't, my views were nowhere near as sophisticated as they are now.

And, so I, that was the mark, but I did a lot of other things. I was involved in, you know, human services issues, environmental issues as well, but I think the hallmark of my legislative years would have been on the labor side until I became a member of the leadership. Jim Longley was governor. That was very contentious, the house was controlled by Republicans, we controlled---, I mean the senate was controlled by Republicans, we controlled the house. So as a majority leader I was the point person negotiating most of the issues, the budget issues, the government reform issues. We got rid of the executive council, and I was chairman of the conference committee. We did that. And, you know, I mean, it was a pretty hectic time for me.

MB: So, I wanted to ask you some questions about how you ended up developing your career. I mean, you must have been very popular, and your beliefs must have been very popular as you kind of gained recognition and became majority leader so young.

JT: Well, I always won, but I never won by much, you know, I wouldn't overstate the popularity part of it. There's an edge to my personality which, you know, there's a self righteousness to my approach that puts some people off. But I always followed the Ed Muskie rule, which was: "You don't need every vote, you just need to win." So most of my victories were fairly close. I decided, just to fast-forward for you, maybe I'm going to fast, but when I was thirty-three, I'd really hit the wall. I had, I was way overextended and my kids were getting older, my practice was suffering, my legislative career was taking a lot of time, so I basically said I wasn't running for reelection. And said that I would run for attorney general if that, if the Democrats controlled the legislature. And I worked very hard to see that that happened.

For the first time we raised money collectively, and we put people on the road, and we even took some people out in the primaries that we knew would lose in the fall, which is kind of risky, but we did it anyway, at least I tried it anyway, And we were lucky. In 1980 all over the country Republicans not just swept the White House and the U.S. senate, they also swept, you know, they swept every state legislature with the exception of three states which broke even, and Maine where we gained about a dozen Democratic seats. And that was just grass roots, grind-it-out issues because 1980 was a very big Republican year. And we won. So I became attorney general in 1980.

MB: Now, so, did you have to be in Washington, or?

JT: No, well, I did, I'd go down once in a while. I chaired the Carter for president committee here, and there's all kinds of stories about that, which I had, which were fun. So I was in and out of Washington, I mean, I was familiar with it by then. I was, you know, I never saw myself at that point even as a candidate for major office, but I was involved with everybody who was, and I knew everybody who was. So, no, I stayed in Maine, I've always lived in Maine.

MB: Can you tell me some of those stories and experience on the Carter for president?

JT: I could, but they'd take too long. I mean, it was complicated. He was, Maine was a key state. He was running against Teddy Kennedy, Joe Brennan, who was our governor then, was for Teddy. And I ended up chairing the Carter effort after a couple people didn't work out so well. Probably the best story in that was, it's actually an Ed Muskie story because it's much more fun. I'd much rather talk about Ed Muskie than myself. Carter had appointed, since the players are all dead here and hopefully people won't be listening to this for a while, Carter had appointed Ed Muskie as secretary of state, so Ed Muskie of course was tremendously loyal to Jimmy Carter. But of course Ed Muskie also wanted to be president of the United States, and it was pretty clear that Carter was going to get creamed by Reagan. So while Muskie was being dutifully loyal to his president, the new senator on the block, George Mitchell, was running around rallying a dump Carter-Muskie for president effort, which hasn't been written down anywhere that I've ever seen.

So, now, of course, publicly, Mitchell was running around saying that Ed Muskie didn't know anything about this, that he was loyal, that this was George Mitchell doing it on his own. But of course, if anybody checked, George didn't have any place to live in Washington and was living in the Muskie house. So we're supposed to believe, now, this is what we're supposed to believe, that Ed Muskie and George Mitchell would get up every morning and have coffee, and then Mitchell would run out and say dump Carter, and Muskie would say he didn't know anything about it. Now, I've never believed that particular story.

So I was involved in a week or so trying to dump Carter even though I was, I liked him, I liked him a lot, but it was just clear Reagan was going to kill him, so we ran around. But that didn't really go anywhere and Muskie eventually had said, “Oh, no, I would never do such a thing, I'm much too loyal for Carter,” after he saw he didn't have the votes to do it. So there you go. I know, that's the kind of story which people ought to take to the grave with them, but it's clearly there. I'm sure if you had Senator Mitchell sitting here, as I'm sure he's filled up tons of these tapes, I can assure you that he would not tell you the truth on that particular, but it's true.

MB: How did you meet Ed Muskie?

JT: Well we all knew Ed Muskie. Now you can get me warmed up. It's much more interesting talking about him than about me. Never going to be any Tierney archives. Nobody cares. Muskie was met by all of us across a brand new medium called television that nobody had ever used in politics before when he ran for governor in 1954. And the, and we were all for Muskie in our house because he was Catholic, and he wasn't old, and he was different, so we were for Muskie from the very beginning. So he was just part of the family, part of the state. So, as a

child, the first time I ever met him, oh he wouldn't remember me, I was but a kid in high school or junior high school going to some rally or something. So, but he was always a presence. I really can't remember the actual first time I shook his hand. I can't remember that.

MB: What did you think of him when you were this young kid?

JT: Oh, he was great, Muskie was great, Muskie was like new and different and exciting and wasn't old. And as I said, he was Catholic; that was the end of the story. I mean, you know, you're not supposed to say those things either, but it's true. And so Muskie was considered just a great performer, and when he went to the senate in '58 by then I was the ripe old age of eleven, I was already, you know, putting up signs and stuff by then. So it was always pretty clear. And I've read everything I could about Muskie. I've been kind of a student of Ed as well as having had the privilege of working with him and knowing him as I went on in later years to become an adult.

But just at that, I mean, you know, I could make something up and say it was his environmental issue or something like that, but that wasn't it. He was just different and new, and Republicans were gray and old and didn't care about us, and Ed Muskie cared about us a lot. That's what we felt in our family.

MB: How did he, how do you think he made you feel like he was touching you personally, even though he wasn't?

JT: Well, but he was. I mean, Ed spoke to things that we cared about, and he knew that. He knew it from his own personal life experience, and he knew it from the state that he knew well, and he'd been running a long, long time, I have a revisionist view on this, on Ed Muskie's early years. And he knew exactly what he wanted to do and did it with great, great skill and great integrity, which is not found.

I mentioned earlier, (I'll fast forward a little bit), he told me he can never understand, he always used to tease George Mitchell, but he actually couldn't understand that whole generation of politicians who wanted to get every vote. Ed Muskie never cared about getting every vote; he just wanted to win, and he knew who his fifty-five to sixty percent of the people were, and that's who he cared about. And the rest of them, that's too bad if they didn't like him.

That's very different, very different than today's politicians. I mean they run around with polls and try to please everybody in every conceivable group. Muskie held a lot of that in, he was pretty contemptuous of it. And it had gotten, towards his latter years, you know, it started to get him in some political hot water, but he just didn't care. I mean, he was going to do what he thought was right. And then he, he was a great politician, but he was a politician knowing how many votes it took to win, not looking for every vote.

If you look back at his vote numbers in Maine, he never rolled up the numbers that George Mitchell or Bill Cohen or Olympia Snowe run up. He was never up in the seventy percentiles. I think he hit sixty once, maybe twice. But most of the time he was out there, he, they were all comfortable wins, but they were never, he was never going for the home run. He was much

more interested in actually doing things than chasing extraneous voters, and people didn't like it, you know, a lot of people didn't like it. But I liked it.

MB: When you say you have a revisionist view of his early years, can you explain that for me?

JT: Yeah, you want to talk about Muskie, are we on to Muskie now? Which is great as opposed to me, well, you can forget about me. I actually told this story which I'm about to tell you to Ed Muskie and Joe Brennan and David Flanagan, who's now president of Bangor Hydro, one night at the Blaine House. It was just the four of us having dinner. Joe Brennan was governor, and he was kind enough to invite me to attend. And, you know, if you read Muskie's history, the history which he has everyone believing, including Frank Coffin and all the other early people, Shep Lee, all the people that were there at the beginning tell me I'm wrong. They said in '54 no one else would run, and he looked around, and he tried to find, no one else would run, and so finally he said, "Okay, no one else will run, I will have to run." I don't believe that. I believe he was running forever and knew exactly what he was doing, and he didn't tell anybody. Maybe he didn't tell Jane, he certainly didn't, if he didn't tell Frank Coffin he probably didn't tell his wife either. So who am I to say what Ed Muskie was thinking.

But if you look at what he did after the war, it's undeniable that he was building a state wide political effort. He was in the state legislature, where he was a member of the leadership. Now, albeit a small leadership, he was an articulate one. He resigned to work for the federal government to enforce wage and price and wage controls during the Korean War. But of course he never enforced them, didn't enforce any of them anywhere. He never sued a Maine businessman for breaking these rules. They used to have these big meetings all over the state, which he would. Just think of it, sounds like a campaign to me, he'd drive around, all the businessmen would pack into some town hall, and he'd give a big speech to them and tell them they should really obey the rules. But if they didn't, there was no down side.

Now, I was spinning this out to Ed Muskie one night after everybody had had a few drinks at the Blaine House, so you can just imagine the reaction. I mean, Joe Brennan was looking at his shoes and David was rolling his eyes up to the ceiling trying to keep from cracking up, and Muskie was just listening to me, then, go on, so then what did he do. Well, then he just thought he'd go out and form the Am Vets, and that was hard to imagine but you couldn't just join the American Legion after WWII. It was kind of seen as an elitist thing in each town, you had to kind of be somebody to join. But the Am Vets would take anybody, enlisted men, and so that's who Ed Muskie cared about.

He ran around, even though he was a lawyer, right, when he was, during WWII he was already graduated from Cornell, but he was running around enlisting cooks and privates, and he was the state wide first commander of the Am Vets. And then who did he represent for clients? Well, he represented all the Catholic hospitals in Maine. Well, that's interesting, what did he do for them? Well, it seems to me he drove from Biddeford to Portland to Lewiston to Bangor. Then of course in Waterville giving, representing Catholic hospitals, which again were on the outs from what would be considered the establishment, you know, hospital where all the, you know, basically the Protestant doctors practiced, and then you had the Catholic ones. So, now maybe these things were all coincidental, but he sure wasn't sitting around Waterville doing divorce law

and doing wills for people. I mean, he was out all the time even when he was in private practice.

So I laid this all out for him and I said, you know, it looks to me like somebody who's representing Catholic hospitals and founding the Am Vets and going around the state giving speeches to business groups but not enforcing the law so anybody would be mad at him was campaigning long before 1954. So there was silence when I got done, and there was this, Brennan was red in the face trying to stop from laughing, because no one, no one spoke back to Ed Muskie, and you certainly didn't challenge this dream that he'd built that no one, he'd begged not to run in 1954, which was just like so much garbage. And this deep, deep throated chuckle started to come up from Ed Muskie. I can hear it now, it was a har-har-har-har, and he had this big smile on his face. And all he said was, he never acknowledged that I was correct, he just said, "You have a very cynical view of my early career." That's all he said. So who knows whether this is the truth.

I did ask him about his campaign that night, and I said, when did you know that you were going to win? And he said, "Well, of course we didn't know for sure until election night," he said, "but I'll tell you," he says, "the minute I announced, I knew we were on to something." He drew big crowds, people came out to see him everywhere, and they'd have fist fights after he left. I know in Durham he spoke, because I talked to people, he spoke at the old town hall, which is now the historical society and, you know, packed the place. I mean, imagine today someone running for governor drawing, you know, two or three hundred people in the town of Durham, which at the time probably had a thousand people in it. And people getting so worked up about it they'd have a fist fight afterwards.

Nobody cares any more, but Muskie was aggravating, I mean, he was, poke your eye with his finger. I mean, when he was out there, he was never a soft spoken, easy going kind of politician, so he was quite unique in that way. So that was my view of Ed Muskie's early career. As I said, it's a very revisionist view, which is not written down anywhere and never will be because there are many, many people who are closer to him than I who were witnesses on the scene who say that that's not true, but I still believe it's true.

MB: When did you become close to Joe Brennan and Muskie, and how did this develop from you being so much younger than them, being involved?

JT: Well, let's see, when I was in the legislature we ran out of money my first year, I mean, my, every, we all ran out of money at the legislature. The Republicans controlled, and they wouldn't pay us, so, but the legislature was still going on so we had to live on our expense accounts. So we all lied on our expense accounts, jumped together in cars, and drove up to Augusta together, and Joe Brennan was one of the people who would do that because we were all so broke. That's the first thing we changed when we took over in '74 was to make sure everybody got paid because, obviously, the Democratic legislators were in the position that needed it more than the Republican legislators, at least at that point.

And so, it was, Maine politics is a small place. Certainly Ken Curtis and Ed Muskie and these people were not, Muskie was pretty remote, actually, at that point. But Ken Curtis was the governor and he's a very outgoing personality and you'd see him in the hallways, and I was a

pretty active guy. I mean, I didn't let many issues go by, so I was involved in a lot of stuff. And so, it's just part of the process. I was elected to the legislature when I was, I guess, twenty-four. But again, that's not unusual, there's always a couple of kid legislators even today so it's not a big deal.

MB: And that was the situation in which you first met Muskie face to face?

JT: You know, I'm trying to remember, I can't remember the first time I met Muskie face to face. I have lots of stories, but I don't really think he had any idea who I was until 1974. Spring of 1974, Muskie, I had some friends of mine who were on his staff, and Muskie was in trouble here in Maine, politically. He had run for president, he lost badly. He was depressed about that, and he was quite removed from the every day life of Maine people. He had been living in Washington at that point since 1958, which was sixteen years, he didn't come back every weekend like these guys do, at all. He liked Washington, he had a family of his own, he had five kids who were living there, in school, and he was very much a part of their lives. And he and Jane and the kids lived in Washington, Maryland, but I mean, he didn't come home.

And he ran for president and couldn't figure out why he'd lost. So there was a real distance, and people were starting to worry about this political issue, so they decided he better meet with some of the young legislators whom he didn't know, including me. So we had a meeting at Ralph Tucker's house in Portland. We were all still in law school, there were five or six legislators there, and, young active people, and the meeting didn't go very well. He was in a bad mood, he exploded to people, felt that he wasn't appreciated, and we all left. We were all Democrats, I mean we clearly were loyal to the cause, but there wasn't any great personal affection for Ed at that point, which would have been, I can tell you exactly, it was the spring of '74. And that was the first time I remember having a conversation with him.

MB: Can you tell me about that conversation? Do you remember it?

JT: Well, I'm trying to remember what the fight was about, but whatever it was, one of the people there asked a pretty innocent question and he just exploded, and he was sitting in the living room and gave one of his long lectures, which kind of killed conversation, you know, nobody's going to ask another question out of fear Ed Muskie pounces on you and beats you down into the ground so you're just this little bloody pulp. And you're just a law student, you know, and he's kind of this hero, and why's he mad at me, you know, I'm on his side was kind of the feeling. So the meeting did not go well at all.

I wish I could remember the issue that he was asked about, I really can't. But he was in trouble with other Democratic constituency groups. He was, the paper mills had gone to, but this is when you start to watch Muskie's great skill. The paper companies had gone to some of the paper mill unions and gotten them to go after Muskie for being too pro-environment, said they were costing jobs and stuff. Well, Muskie didn't care, he'd stand up in front of a union hall and he'd explode at the union guys, I mean, he wouldn't pander. But he was so forceful, and his intellect was so great he'd usually convince you. Muskie was really pretty good. I've got lots of Muskie stories as the years went on.

MB: Can you tell me some of the Muskie stories that stand out in your mind as really?

JT: Well, I can give you dozens, and they're floating back to me now. I can remember, I was, I wasn't in the Am Vets, but there was a very strong Am Vets hall in my town, Durham, and so they wanted to give me an award. So we came up to Lewiston to the hotel for the dinner. And Muskie was there, and Dave Emory was in the house then so he was there. And they brought up some guy who was a national lobbyist for the Am Vets. And Muskie had had a few pops, I'd take him around and he was, he was ready for this guy. And this guy came in and said, "Muskie as chairman of the budget committee had been cutting important veterans programs." And, well, he got about three sentences into that, and of course the crowd was all, they all had a long cocktail party as well.

So this guy was coming in from Washington and he's dumping on Muskie in front of the Am Vets that he had founded. Of course, the little dweeb didn't know that Muskie had founded the Am Vets, and so Muskie gets up in the middle of this guy's speech, towered over him, walked over, and the guy's trying to give this prepared remarks, criticizing Ed Muskie, puts him arm around him, leans into the microphone, and says, "That's not true, that's not true, you know that's not true." Well, try to imagine, here, he's chairman of the budget committee, you've got this little Am Vet lobbyist there with his prepared remarks in front of a crowd of two or three hundred into-their-cups Am Vets. So the whole crowd just stands and cheers for Muskie and the little dweeb doesn't know what to do, and Muskie goes back and sits down, and he's sitting next to me and he says, "Ah, that's not true, he's got a lot of nerve coming up here, ar-ar-ar-ar." So the guy starts to go back and do his speech again, and Muskie gets up again and says, "Now you know for sure that's not true," and he kind of pushes the guy away from the microphone and gives a little extemporaneous five minute blast, at which time Muskie gets this huge standing ovation, or tottering ovation would be better because they were all drunk.

And people were cheering for Ed and this little dweeb just kind of quit and sat down and that was the end of that. Now, if Muskie had left well enough alone, that was great. Now the problem was, of course, these things go on and on. So then Muskie gets up to give his speech, and of course he gets up and gives one of these forty-five minute things and put everybody to sleep. But if he'd quit when he'd just pounded the guy into the ground, that would have been great. So, I mean, there are dozens of stories like this. I mean, wherever you'd go Muskie would treat everyone exactly the same. I took him into a Legion post one time, we were campaigning in Lisbon . . . .

MB: Hold on one second, I'm going to switch sides.

End of Side A
Side B

MB: Okay.

JT: You have to talk about Muskie in terms of stories, and that makes him different than politicians today. You know, I don't think anybody can tell any Jim Tierney stories. If they can, they're not worth very much. But with Muskie, everything is in terms of stories and vignettes

because he was larger than life, he was colorful, he was honest, he was bombastic, and that doesn't happen now. And he treated everyone the same. I think I said that on the tape, I mean he would treat absolutely everyone the same, it didn't make any difference who you were, you know, right up until the end, and at the end of this I'll tell you the last time I saw him because he was just the same way that he's always been. Muskie had, so Muskie was estranged from the political establishment, but he was a competitor, and he wanted to stay in the senate, so he, you know, sucked it in and started to come back more.

And we had, and I didn't fully understand kind of the magical hold that Muskie had on the people of Maine. The polls were showing him running neck and neck with Bill Cohen, who was a congressman at the time in the summer of '75. Cohen was coming off the impeachment, was very popular, and so was talking about running against Muskie. And the polls were showing them dead even. So, there was a parade in Lisbon Falls, it was a big parade, it was Lisbon's something anniversary, I don't know what it was. So I was there, Muskie shows up in this outrageous looking shirt, he always wore these stupid looking shirts, and we marched together down the streets. Now, I'm sure you have everyone talking about how Muskie had this fantastic memory, remembered everybody's name, whoever they were. I don't know, maybe that's true, I don't know if it's true or not. But I know that whenever I was with him, I was always walking one step behind whispering the names of the people in his ear so that they would think that he remembered their name, so. But again, I do have a cynical view of the world but anyway, but I'd say, that's Bunny up there on the left and Muskie'd go "Bunny, how are you? I haven't seen you---," you know, that kind of stuff. So, but walking in that parade was abs-, I've never even today had an experience quite like this.

It was, I mean this crowd just loved him, they hadn't seen him in years, he hadn't been around, and they just erupted. They raced out to shake his hand, it was the only time I'd ever seen a politician in Maine, not a presidential candidate, having so many people with hands outstretched that you couldn't shake them at all. So he would just like, he was doing two hands at once, that's kind of a visual which doesn't show up on the tape. But instead of shaking people individually, he just kind of put both hands out and people could just kind of grab him. I'd never seen that, and I can see that, and I was marching with Leighton Cooney who was a state representative with me at the time, and we were these young politicians, we, you know, you'd hear, people would bad mouth Muskie all the time, oh, he's not around, he doesn't care about us. Well wow, when I saw that parade I said to myself, Bill Cohen's dead meat. I don't care what the polls are, he's going to beat him.

Cohen was in the same parade, a little bit ahead or behind or whatever, got nowhere near that reaction. And I said, this thing's over and Bill Cohen figured that out and waited two years and cleaned Bill Hathaway's clock. But Muskie was, Muskie was that. And that was the parade in which he told me you never pass a nun, this was one of his ear-, probably not appropriate any more, but there used to be a lot of nuns. And he said, "You know, if you see a nun, they're never in the parade. They'll never come up to the front of the line, they'll always be sitting back on somebody's porch," he says, "so what you have to do is get out of the parade, push people out of the way, go up and shake the nun's hand." So I always remembered that thing. And of course Muskie started off at the head of the parade and ended up at the end because he kept running back and forth and shaking people's hands.

It was really a great experience, and it was a gut, visceral, emotive connection between real, live working people. I described my town earlier, with Ed Muskie which was just magical. And I said, ah, this guy's here forever. And he was, and still is, which is why we talk in the Muskie Archives instead of some other place because he really had that kind of connection with people that was so deep and so real.

I've got to tell my favorite Muskie story because, and I wasn't even there for it, but it's just a great story, I have to tell it anyway. Muskie was, in '76 he was campaigning against Bob Monks in what would prove to be his last election, and he, this was a no-brainer, he was going to win this thing once Cohen got out. But he was up, we had this Saturday, you know, in the fall, October of '76, kind of political event and Muskie was going to come, you know, speak at the Democratic dinner we were going to have. And we had the county committee and all these people were there at the Lisbon High School. But he's had his filibuster the night before and he'd had to cancel all his Saturday morning events, and so this was going to be the first event of the day, but he showed up in the foulest of moods.

This was in the, oh, after lunch, and he hadn't slept all night, he'd been sleeping in one of those stupid cots in the senate. And he showed up at the house, my house, where he was scheduled to sleep for an hour or so. And, you know, we're all nervous, Ed Muskie coming to my house, that's a pretty big deal so I'm nervous, my wife's nervous, my kids are lined up. And Muskie throws open the door, walks right in, doesn't say hello to anybody, "Where am I going to sleep?" "The back room." So he walks through to the back room and that's it, he goes in the room, and we're all kind of standing there looking at each other. Some staffer or whoever it was was driving him around says, "Well, that's Muskie," so we shrug our shoulders.

So, eventually it comes time that somebody's got to go wake him up. Well, I'm not going to wake him up. Nobody had the courage to wake him up. So I sent my daughter Josie, who's a high school teacher now, and she was two, and we said, "Josie you go in." So she goes in the room, the door closes, and we don't hear anything, and we're watching the clock, and, you know, it's getting close to have to go and we still don't hear anything. So, finally, you know, I kind of peeked in to see what was happening. Well, Muskie was up, and he was shaving. And my daughter Josie was sitting on the toilet, dangling her feet down, talking a blue streak, and he was talking a blue streak. They were two of the happiest looking people you ever saw in your life.

It was just a wonderful little family story to share. Well the evening goes on, my family goes to the supper, I'm left home alone; I'm going to drive Ed. So Ed comes out, it's time to go, and he says, "Mix me a drink, I need a drink, I'm not going in there without a drink." And I go, we don't have any alcohol in our house, you know, beer once in a while but, I don't know how to mix a drink *(unintelligible phrase)* rather embarrassing. So he says, "Give me a drink, whatever you got." So I had, my father-in-law had left some whiskey or vodka or something, so I *(unintelligible word)* some drink and he just kind of sits there in my living room and he downs one. "I want another one." So all right, so I went and got another one. So, two drinks, I drive him to the thing, and he's in a foul mood again.

"Up all night, nobody cares, I been in the Senate all these years, nobody appreciates what I do."

Door opens and he's just wonderful, he shakes every hand, everybody loves him, he's remembered all their names. He gets up and gives one of his, you know, for a guy who's exhausted he gets up and gives this long, long oration. Pouring rain, can't, a monsoon like rain, very important, so it's dark, it's night, we're out of there at seven-thirty or so, eight o'clock. So he's driving back to Kennebunk, and this is the part of the story I wasn't part of, but the driver told me this story very quickly thereafter. So he gets out, in the car, so there's four people in the car, there's the driver who tells me this story, there's Muskie in the front seat, and Jane and Melinda in the back seat. Pouring rain, cold, fall stuff.

So they start to leave Lisbon to drive to Kennebunk, which is, you know, an hour and a half. Muskie's back in a foul mood again, "Nobody cares, why am I doing this kind of thing?" And Jane says, "Melinda wants an ice cream cone." Well, Ed of course then responds with, "There are five reasons why you can't have an ice cream cone, number one, number two, number three, number four---," he goes through all the list of why an ice cream cone would be inappropriate. Jane goes, "Oh Ed, don't be silly, she wants an ice cream cone. She's a kid, let her have an ice cream cone." So while they're having this discussion, the driver says, "well, there is a," with great fear and trembling by the way, he said, because he didn't want to get in the middle of this, he mentioned the fact that there was indeed a Dairy Queen that he could pass on his way back to Kennebunk. "Oh, all right, all right, all right."

So they drive through Topsham, and driving through Topsham they come up the famous, probably the most famous Dairy Queen in Maine because it has on the side of it a little sign that says, "LBJ ate here." You ever seen that? It's right in Topsham, can't miss it. And LBJ did indeed stop there for an ice cream cone once. It's famous in Maine, LBJ ate here on the side of the Dairy Queen. So they pull in, pouring rain, so they all order something, a sundae and a shake and ice cream cone, whatever, so the driver, Clifford Hobbins, he teaches at the Portsmouth *(unintelligible word),* gets out of the car, and goes up and he orders the things and he brings them back to the car and the four of them are sitting there having their ice cream. And Muskie's still in a foul mood, and he looks up and he sees the little sign that says, "LBJ ate here."

"Huh, LBJ, I served in the senate with LBJ, he didn't like me, and I was in the senate when he was vice president, and I was in the senate while he was president, I was in the senate since he's been out. Now he's dead, and I'm still in the senate. What am I doing, what am I doing." So he's growling and grumping, and so Clifford, they've finished the stuff, he wants to throw the stuff away, you know, the empty stuff, you know, the plastic and the, and so he goes, so he gets to go out. So Muskie says to him, "Ask those kids in there if they know who LBJ is, they don't even know. Nobody cares, kids don't care about me, they don't care about anybody, they don't know about anything."

So he goes up and he pounds on the window in the pouring rain, the teenage kids who were working the Dairy Queen on this Saturday night opened the thing, and he says, "Do you know who LBJ is?" They said, "No, no idea who LBJ is, his name's on the side." Clueless, totally clueless. So Clifford, the driver, realizes he's got to get back in the car, either lie to Muskie, which he didn't want to do, or tell him the truth and have to sit for well over an hour on the way to Kennebunk with the fact that these teenagers didn't know who LBJ was. So Clifford, in desperation, said to the teenage girls, he says, "Well, do you have any idea who Ed Muskie is?"

And they said, “Well sure, everybody knows who Ed Muskie is, he's our senator.”

So Clifford goes back to the car, sits in the car, pouring rain, and says, “Well Senator, they don't know who LBJ is, but they sure know who you are.” Muskie throws open the door, runs out into the pouring rain, pounds on the window, the slide comes back, the teenagers are all giggley, he shakes their hands, jumps back in the car and drives to Kennebunk saying, “The young people will save this country, it's the greatest place on earth.” So, that's one of my favorite, favorite Ed Muskie stories because it's so true, even though I wasn't there. It's just the way he lived his life, where all his grumps and stuff had never really counted for anything because his heart was huge and his compassion was limitless.

And so that was one of my great Muskie stories I wanted to share. One of my kids made sure I, sent me an E-mail this morning, said “You've got to tell the Dairy Queen story.” So, that was kind of, there are lots and lots of other stories I can tell. We were campaigning on lower Lisbon Street one night, a bunch of us with Muskie, and he, we went into the Pastime Club. Now, as a good Bates student, you've never been to the Pastime Club, nor should you ever go to the Pastime Club. It's a very rough place. And we went in it at night, and this is the seventies, so hair was very long, there was a lot of drugs in the room, a lot of booze, and there was a so-called band playing, with the lead of the band looked like Alice Cooper on a bad day. And in walks Ed Muskie. There were about fifty people there, all young, and in walks Ed Muskie to campaign, and a more incongruous scene you cannot imagine.

And the guy at the band stops the band, and he says, “There's Ed Muskie, I want Ed Muskie to come up here to the microphone.” So Ed Muskie lumbers up to the microphone, and it's pretty late on a Saturday night, and he says, “Well, Bob Monks, he may have millions of dollars, but he'll never be a U.S. senator, Ed Muskie's our U.S. senator,” so he introduces Ed. And Ed of course then proceeds to give one of his political speeches to these kids who are out drinking, stoned out of their mind, didn't make any difference to Ed Muskie, didn't make any difference who you were, how old you were, how poor you were, how rich you were, you always got the same, you got the same picture. So Ed gives the whole thing and when we come outside, there was a, lower Lisbon Street's a pretty tough area, and there was a gentleman there, an elderly gentleman, and he said, he shook Muskie's hand and said how much he believed in him. And he says, “You know, my wife is ill and she couldn't, she can't get out, but she lives on the fourth, fifth, sixth floor, whatever it was down in Little Canada, and it would mean a lot to her if you could sign something to her.”

So Muskie, long day of campaigning, doesn't sign anything, he says you just take me to your home. So, they did. And he was gone for about half an hour, we're all standing outside wondering what the heck's happened. But then again, it was Ed Muskie. Remarkable. Remarkably personal and caring, a man of great conviction for all of his, and a man who let us all see his faults, let us see the fact that he would drink or he'd, I'm not even sure that was a fault, but see the fact he'd get mad. Wouldn't care, I mean that was how he bonded with the people of the state.

MB: You had mentioned that Ed had told you some stuff about his father and about his home town of Rumford?

JT: Oh yeah, Rumford was a very stratified, socially stratified town, and of course they were Polish, there weren't many Polish people there, but, enough so they had their own church. And, which was torn down. Muskie thought they should have made it a shrine he told me once, because he was born there. I don't think that was serious. But his dad was a tailor, a very good tailor. And a tailor then, of course, worked on fine clothes if you were going to make any money. And so all the owners of the Oxford Paper Mill would come to Ed's dad to be the tailor, and Ed would, Ed's dad, Ed can remember his father getting in huge fights, it must have been huge fights with these mill owners, where everybody else in town was petrified of them. You were afraid of these people, they were the most powerful, wealthy people in town. But they kept coming back, as Ed would say, "Because," he says, "my dad was a great tailor and if you're a good tailor they'll always come back." And I think that was kind of an interesting metaphor for his own political life, that he really was the best and no matter how angry people might get at him for a particular issue, they knew that they'd always come back because he was the best tailor in town, and he clearly, clearly was. And there are many senators, U.S. senators now, who I run into in my travels who have these warm Muskie stories of things that he would say and do in the senate. He was not a big social guy, he didn't go out with the boys, he would go home. But there were a few that he was close to and they always had Muskie stories, and if you could get some of them I think it would be a great thing for your archives, if you haven't already done it. I'm sure you probably already have, it just crossed my mind.

MB: When were you able to establish a close relationship with him and earn his, I mean clearly you earned his respect.

JT: I don't know, I don't know if I ever earned his respect. I hope I did. I think he kind of liked me in a way, but I was never close to him the way many of the people who you talk to were close to him. I was a different generation, a different time. I had disagreements with him, I thought he was too slow on the war and other issues. But I think he just kind of liked me, maybe because I was irreverent, and maybe I'm a throwback to a different time, too. I mean, the way I view politics is that you should go out and do what you think is right and wear it on your sleeve. And if they beat you up for it, then you just keep going and if people don't like it you lose. That's okay.

So maybe he kind of liked me. But I don't, I don't know. I mean, he's not a man, he was from a generation that didn't spare, you know, emotional words very easily. He's not a guy who would, you know, ever hug anybody or do those kinds of things, certainly not in public, deep, deep emotions. But you know, there are other people whose homes he would stay in and I was never really in that category. Mostly generational, I think, and also I just wasn't, I just wasn't there. So I'd like to think that he kind of cared about me in his own way, and I think he probably did.

Another great story, when I was running, this is probably a story on politics more than anything else. I was running for governor and behind in the polls and we were campaigning in Waterville in the fall, and I was with Joe Brennan, the governor running for congress, and there was me running for governor, and there was George Mitchell who was the senator, and there was Ed Muskie and we were in Waterville, and there was a whole line of state representatives and the mayor all streamed behind us. But there aren't many people on the sidewalks in Waterville, so

we turned around the corner going down to where Levine's clothing store used to be, and lo and behold, there's one poor woman walking up the other way and I'm trying to look at the scene through her eyes. She looks up and who does she see coming at her, she sees Muskie and Brennan and Mitchell and Tierney bearing down on her. And she, kind of this panicky look, was there any way she could get away and there clearly wasn't so we all shook her hand and, you know. And she just was very polite and very nice, and so as we were leaving I forget, George I think said, "Well, be sure to vote for Tierney and Brennan," or something like that. And she said, "I'll think about it."

So we all completely cracked up because we obviously realized she wasn't going to vote for any of us. But it shows you how much power having all these people in one place brings, not very much, you can't change a single vote sometimes, but Muskie was great and he was very good to me campaign-wise. Had a big fund raiser at his home after I won the primary in '86, which was a great trip. But he was just always a great kindness and was willing, cut an ad for me at the end, and it's something I treasure.

MB: How did you come to run for governor?

JT: Oh, back on me again, less interesting. What happened, I'd been, I served as attorney general for six years and believed that that was the place where I could do the most good for my state, and was kind of naturally kind of propelled along to it. I didn't turn out to be a very good candidate, although there are those who are friends of mine who would disagree. And I was out of sync with the state I think at that point, too. There was a lot of anger against Joe Brennan who was leaving then, although Joe was a great guy, and I think had been a great governor. There was a lot of bad feeling about him then; he barely won a congressional seat that year. And they just saw me as a continuation, one more kind of Irish former AG I think. But I didn't do myself a lot of good on some of the issues and positions I took. But I believed in them and believe they've been sustained historically, but, you know, I don't spend a lot of time worrying about that.

So I, yeah, I just ran, but it's not interesting, terribly. And then I stayed as attorney general for another four years and, you know, ran for congress and lost. At that point I'd pretty much had it with politics, or politics had pretty much had it with me as an electoral official. I never really thought of myself as a candidate. Most people would say that's not true, but in my own heart I just felt uncomfortable being the candidate. I enjoyed the operations of government, still do, which is why I do what I do now, but I don't, as a candidate I'd just as soon never see it again.

MB: Can you, I guess back tracking a little bit, tell me what the tobacco suit was and who was involved?

JT: Well, there's a lot, that'll be documented every place. Basically, the attorney general of Mississippi, Mike Morin, the attorney general of Minnesota, Skip Humphrey, Hubert Humphrey, III, sued the tobacco industry for lying and cheating and not telling the truth to people about the nature of their product. And we, there were four states in and we were kind of stuck. And what I do now is that I advise attorneys general and I work with them around a whole host of issues. And they came and dug up some money from the *(name)* Johnson Foundation, they paid me, and

so I kind of helped them organize the other states, and we ended up getting everybody eventually to sue or to settle against the tobacco industry for billions of dollars.

So, we've increased the price of cigarettes which cuts production, in the first year we've seen a thirteen percent reduction in use. I don't know if that percentage will hold, but it's certainly has got to make you feel good. So it was a huge, you know, effort, big chunk of my life was spent doing that. I had to kind of emerge from the background, I did a lot of press because I kind of had to. There really wasn't anybody else to do certain stories at certain times in the process, so if you go into Lexus on a really slow day and type my name in, you'll see that I'm in the newspaper hundreds of times. I pretty much kept myself to the *Times* and the *Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* and NPR, and let the AGs handle the press in their own states. So you won't find me much in the *Portland Press Herald* or the, you know, the *DeMoines Register.* But now I'm involved in the Microsoft lawsuit, working on it. I think it's a company that's a bully and pushes people around. And I had some private clients but, basically, but I was able to help get nineteen states to sue Microsoft and so we're in the middle of that case now.

So I've always kept doing the same thing. I've worked out of my house, I only take clients I agree with, which is kind of picky and choosy, and the only way you can do that is by keeping your overhead down. You know, I respect lawyers who don't do that, or can't do that. But it's just the way I've chosen to live my life is to pretty much continue the same things I've always believed in and just do it from this perspective, and the advent of technology and the like, it's gotten a lot easier. So, I was in Silicon Valley last week, and I give a lot of speeches out of state, I don't do anything in Maine. I spoke to a whole bunch of U.S. attorneys recently about the value of prosecution and where I think the Dept. of Justice should go on criminal issues.

And I write op-ed pieces every once in a while, but again not for Maine, for consumption outside. And I like that because it allows me to, I've I think succeeded in regaining my privacy here in the state. We have one child who's still home, who's, who we adopted when she was a baby. She's now ten, almost eleven. And I enjoy that, I enjoy not having to deal, I really am in the position where I deal with only the things I want to deal with, and that's a luxury almost no one in the world gets to have, so I feel very fortunate.

MB: What was the, what are the atmosphere of those huge cases, the Microsoft case and the tobacco case, going up against what seems like a formidable?

JT: Yeah, well, it's kind of what I've always done if you look back. The atmospherics are always, you know, pretty tense. You're on a high wire. The press now operates twenty-four hours a day. I can't imagine how an Ed Muskie could survive today in this political atmosphere. You're on a twenty four hour cycle, so the issues come and go very, very quickly, and you really communicate to other people through the media. You know, I'm communicating, some of the other people are communicating back to me. I don't even know who they are but people on the other side, you're giving head fakes and trying to figure out an angle to see if there are ways to settle these kinds of cases, short of the traditional resolution. And so you're under a lot of tension, you have to work all the time. Well, that's not fair, you have to be ready to work all the time would be a better description, because sometimes things can be quite slow and then things break out and you have to move very, very quickly. But it's a twenty-four hour a day job, which

makes it kind of fun.

MB: Why would you say that Ed wouldn't?

JT: Well, I don't know. Maybe he would. But if he was starting today, I don't see how his temperament would work in this world. His one-on-one view is pretty foreign. We package people, try to look a certain way. And Maine's kind of an exception, but even Maine, it's a larger degree than we'd like to admit. You know, heavy direct mails and very, very negative campaigning and, you know, smiling faces and, on television. It's, I don't know, he had a great capacity to be flexible, though, and so maybe he could very well still pull it off. If anybody could, he could, but you know, I mean just, you look at his pictures, he doesn't look like a modern politician, the way he stands and talks and walks and deals with people. Long speeches that, you know, are totally out of, you know, it's just not acceptable any more. But boy, I'll tell you though, he was good on television. When he'd sit down and look straight ahead at the camera and speak with that voice of his, it was pretty, it could grab you. So maybe, I'd like to be wrong, so let's pretend I'm wrong and say that he'd do fine now. But I do think it would be, take a different set of skills and, but skills I think he'd be perfectly capable of developing.

For example, that story I told you about the Am Vets and him putting his arm around this lobbyist for the Am Vets and just pounding him into submission. I mean nobody does that, nobody would ever do that because in today's pack driven society, that lobbyist would go back and send direct mail to all the veterans organizations and they'd raise a lot of money, and they'd say, “You don't care about the veterans,” and they'd show a TV ad of someone, of a hearse leaving Togus and say,” you've made that happen, that you've, you know, you killed some veteran.” I mean, that's what would happen today, so you couldn't do that. But Ed, so Ed would just have to sit there and grit his teeth in today's environment, and it's hard imagining Ed Muskie sitting anywhere and gritting his teeth. He just kind of does what he wants to do.

MB: I want to kind of move back to Ed, I want to know if you have any more stories?

JT: Oh, I got a lot of stories. I mean, I don't know, I could use up your whole tape on Muskie stories. And I remember them because, and I try to remember the stories that most clearly visualize his, who he, who he was. And as I said, there are many, many people who are closer to him than I, who were on the board of this wonderful organization, and so in some ways I feel almost embarrassed to be, you know, trotted out as someone talking about Ed Muskie because these other people knew him so much better. But I do remember our last time together. It was his, well there are a couple interesting times I remember. I remember, well, no, I'm not going to tell you that one. But I'll tell you the last time I saw him, it was, Ed Muskie was, it was his eightieth birthday, and there was a big party here in Maine that I didn't go to.

I just didn't want to deal with all the Maine Democrats, but I did go to the one in Washington and sat with a bunch of dear friends of mine, and Muskie was great. And then afterwards, there must have been a little reception or something, I can't remember, and, and anyway, we ended up all walking out together. There was Ed and Jane and me, Leon Billings of course, Charlie Micoleau might have been there, I can't remember, but it was all very comfortable. And this might have actually been one of the most interesting indications of, you asked earlier, you know, it was an

interesting indication that maybe Muskie kind of liked me after all. We're walking out, and at this point I'm a former attorney general, not a politician any more, but I was advising attorneys general around the country.

So Ed comes up behind me and he says, "I watched "60 Minutes" the other night and saw the attorney general of Arizona was doing such and such." I honestly can't remember what the attorney general of Arizona was doing, and I said, yeah he did. "Is he a client of yours?" And I said, yeah, he's a client of mine and a friend of mine. "Do you agree with him?" And I knew right away, now here it is, this is the way Muskie maybe shows affection, right? He's eighty years old, it's his eightieth birthday party, most people would, this would be a time for sentimentalism or maudlin reminiscences of time gone by. Not Muskie. "You agree with him?" And I knew whatever I said, he would take the other side. And sure, so I said, yeah sure, I didn't really care, I said, yeah sure, I agree with him because of such and such.

Muskie goes, "You're wrong, for three reasons." Now, we're standing there now, now we're at the door of the *(unintelligible word)* and Jane's ready to go. I mean this is late now, okay, because there'd been the whole dinner and the party and the reception afterwards. "You're wrong for three reasons, and he ticks off the reasons why I'm wrong, not the attorney general of Arizona, but why I am wrong." And they, finally they peeled him away and he got in the car and off he went, and that was the last time I ever saw him. But I always remember that story now because it was so Muskie, but it was also, I think he was just sending a message to me, too, that maybe he was kind of pleased with the way I was living my life and that I was, that he somehow knew that I was working, helping AGs do good things out there. And yet he could never say that, so he had to kind of pick a fight, and I thought it was just perfect, just, just perfect. So, it's a very fond and warm memory.

MB: Can you remember, l know that Muskie always had very strong feelings about people, and he would tell people, either to their face or -

JT: Yes, that's true, yeah.

MB: Can you remember any people that he was involved with that you remember him telling you how he felt?

JT: Well he, I don't know, maybe I just wasn't there. I mean, he wouldn't, in his later years he would be more apt to say kinder things, but mostly he would do it by how he acted. And there were a great number of my contemporaries and friends who he cared a great deal about, who were on his staff, people like Jim Case, Mary McAleney, Jim Wilfong campaigned with him, Phil Merrill was his campaign manager one time. And he would, these were my contemporaries, and so he would show affection for them. But clearly he would save, I mean most of the people who he felt most comfortable with were people of his own generation, and shared the WWII experiences and shared his experience coming, you know, coming on line through Maine government, and he would visit them and stay in their homes and the like.

You know, I'll just tell this little story, I mean, I always, I mean Muskie of course was cheap, he never paid for anything, and got in trouble shortly after he left, he was in a big law firm. But he

jumped out of a cab in Washington, I know, without paying because he just didn't think he had to do that. The cab driver had to run after him and scream at him and tell him to pay. Muskie just assumed other people would pay for everything. There are all those kinds of stories. No, I guess I'm just not the *(unintelligible word),* you know, I could guess, but I wouldn't think that, I don't remember him at least in my presence, you know, saying, oh, I really love that guy or I just think he's the greatest.

Obviously he had this very strong father and son kind of relationship with Senator Mitchell, who had been his driver way back when he, well, I mean, you know, he picked George out of, George was wasting away working for an insurance company or something in Washington when Muskie had him on his staff, and he encouraged George to go back and helped him become party chairman, and during those years George would drive him. And George would tell me about how he would drive, you know, drive to Machias and back with Muskie and they would talk and talk and talk about how he loved the state and how he really cared about things, and how he would be furious when he'd see people despoiling it. And if it was a paper company or a power company or something that was pushing people around, Muskie would be furious about it.

So clearly that relationship with Senator Mitchell was extraordinarily poignant and personal. And yet when I'd see them together, you'd usually see them te-, there would be a very kind of male teasing kind of thing as opposed to, you know, open statements of affection, when I was around. But that usually meant there were other people around, too, it was rare when it would be just the three of us. So that would be a great sense, be a great, great affection for George Mitchell. And I know the feelings were clearly reciprocated.

MB: Can you think of anything else that you could share, any other stories?

JT: Oh, I'm sure when I drive home I'll think of, you know, another ten stories, but, I mean I think those were the basics. I don't want to overdo this. But he was, there are other people who will chronicle his actual legislative accomplishments. But for a whole kind of generation of us, he showed us that, he was one of the, and he wasn't the only one, there were other people in the senate at the time with him, who really showed us what public service was about. How you took positions and you cared about people, and you weren't afraid to have government be a positive force in people's lives, and really go out there and do things, as opposed to, you know, as opposed to, you know, kind of the kind of rhetoric and the tone today which is, even if you want government to do something, you have to be very defensive about it and couch it in very nongovernmental terms. So it was a great generation, and he caught it, and he's obviously, you know, they talk about that WWII generation now as slipping away every day, and Ed Muskie was very much a leader of it.

MB: Thank you.

End of Interview